

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed February 7, 2008, in which claims 1, 2, 5–8 and 11–14 were rejected and claims 3, 4, 9 and 10 were objected to as dependent upon a rejected base claim. With this Amendment, claims 3 and 9 are cancelled, claims 1 and 7 are amended, and claims 22 and 23 are added. Claims 1, 2, 4–8, 10–14 and 22–23 are now pending in the application, and are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

In addition, claims 15–21 were previously withdrawn from consideration pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected species. (Office Action dated May 4, 2007, ¶ 1.) Claim 15 was previously amended to depend from claim 1, and claims 16–21 depend from claim 15. Upon a finding that claim 1 is patentable, claims 15–21 should also be allowable.

The Office Action indicates that claim 3 and claim 9 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 3 is cancelled and rewritten in independent form as new claim 22, including all the limitations of the base claim (claim 1), and any intervening claims. Claim 9 is cancelled and rewritten in independent form as new claim 23, including all the limitations of the base claim (claim 7), and any intervening claims. New claims 22 and 23 are thus allowable.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 5–8 and 11–14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Ogawa et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,425,988 (Ogawa). According to the Office Action, Ogawa shows an encapsulant 12 including a self-assembled monolayer with a self limiting thickness of one layer of a molecule, covering a surface of a component such as a slider. (Office Action, ¶ 2.)

Independent claim 1 (from which claims 2 and 4–6 depend) is amended to point out that the encapsulant comprised of a self assembled monolayer with a self limiting thickness of one layer of a molecule covers a ceramic surface of a component, while not covering a non-ceramic surface of the component. Similarly, independent claim 7 (from which claims 8 and 10–14 depend) is amended to point out that the encapsulant covers a ceramic surface of the slider body, while not covering a non-ceramic surface of the slider body. (See Specification, ¶ 43.)

This limitation is neither taught nor suggested by Ogawa. Instead, Ogawa teaches that a monomolecular film is formed on the surface of a metal film, oxidized metal film, semi-conductor

film, oxidized semi-conductor film, or organic monomolecular film. (Ogawa, col. 2, ll. 39-45.) Ogawa explicitly teaches that the monomolecular film is formed on a variety of both ceramic and non-ceramic materials, including carbon, Cr, Mn, W, Mo, Ti, and oxidized materials thereof, and Si, SiC, SiO₂, Si₃N₄, and the like. (Ogawa, col. 4, ll. 7-30.) Ogawa does not contemplate an encapsulant that covers ceramic surfaces, while not covering non-ceramic surfaces.

With these amendments, claims 1, 2, 4-8 and 10-14, 22 and 23 define over the prior art and are allowable. In addition, withdrawn claims 15-21, which depend from claim 1, should also be allowable. Reconsideration and notice to this effect is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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